Offensive Missiles Reported in Cuba

By United Press International

Defense and State Department officials said today they are satisfied there are no long-range Soviet missiles in Cuba, despite the claims of a former U.S. Foreign Service officer.

Paul D. Bethel, who served as information officer at the U.S. Embassy in Havana during Fidel Castro's rise to power, told the Senate Internal Security subcommittee yesterday that the Russians never removed all their offensive missiles from Cuba after the 1962 missile crisis and have since moved more of them in.

Manuel Apud, former No. 3 man in Ernesto (Che) Guevara's Ministry of Industries, told the panel that Cuba was searching for fissionable materials and now has titanium and cobalt.

Apud, who fled from Cuba in December, said he personally had seen Russian missiles up to 60 feet to 80 feet long in Cuba during 1966.

Spymaster in U.S. Named

Apud and Bethel both said that Cuba had a spy apparatus in the United States. Bethel said the organization was run by a lawyer known as Enrique Tagles, and was financed through the Czech Embassy in Washington.

Apud told the subcommittee that Cuba got U.S. funds covertly by controlling Bolita lottery operations in Miami, New Jersey, New York and California.

Bethel said Cuba now has a nuclear strike potential from the concealment of caves and hundreds of miles of tunnels honeycombing the island.

Retired from government service, Bethel now is executive director of the Citizens' Committee for a Free Cuba, which supports the goal of Cuban exiles to regain their homeland. He lives in Miami and edits Latin American Report, a newsletter which draws heavily on exile sources for its reports on Cuba affairs.

Officials note that the United States has maintained regular air reconnaissance of Cuba, interrogates refugees coming from Cuba and maintains other intelligence sources.

Russia Still Shipping

Officials say that the weight of their reports indicates missiles only about 30 feet long, the antiaircraft SAMs (surface-to-air missiles) which Russia gave Cuba before October, 1962, and which are still there.

Russia is still shipping some military equipment into Cuba, probably including some replacement SAMs, U.S. officials say. In addition, SAMs are being moved about the island and Soviet aid is unloaded from ships by military personnel at night amid great secrecy, they report.

Cubans have been making extensive use of caves, but U.S. officials believe they are used for purposes such as petroleum storage rather than for long-range missiles, as Bethel believes.

State Department officials said the big difference between their denials now and those made shortly before the offensive missiles were discovered in 1962 is today's far more intensive aerial reconnaissance.